

Together Let Us Build Working Class Power in our Communities

Speech by SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande

at the Launch of the 2011 SACP Red October Campaign

We are in that time of the year when the SACP launches its popular Red October Campaign. Our Red October Campaign is inspired and seeks to take forward the spirit and the victories of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia – ushering in the first workers' government in the 20th century.

The Red October campaign has been an important platform in building and strengthening the SACP over the last 11 years. Through our Red October Campaign we have built an SACP that is closer to the workers and the poor of our country. Through this campaign we say to the workers and the poor of our country, take up struggles to change your lives for the better and be the masters of your own destinies. It is only the workers and the poor themselves, in struggle and in solidarity with all other progressive forces that will consolidate and deepen our national democratic revolution, and advance the struggle for socialism in our country.

Through these campaigns we have also exposed the failures of the capitalist system to address the needs of the overwhelming majority of our people, and particularly also the failures of the neo-liberal macro-economic policies pursued since 1996. Our Red October Campaign has also been an important organising tool to recruit more and more members to the SACP. The Red October Campaign has also been an important platform for the ideological development of SACP members, and generally to conscientise and mobilise the workers and the poor to be the makers of their own history.

Since its launch twelve years ago, the Red October Campaign has been an important campaigning platform led by the SACP, and has notched some important victories, including:

- a. the roll out of banking services to the poor via Umzansi account
- b. the transformation of the financial sector as a whole
- c. The passage of the Co-operatives and Co-operative Banks legislation
- d. the introduction of the National Credit Act to protect consumers against reckless lending
- e. the convening of the Land Summit in 2005, direct as a result of the 2004 Red October Campaign – a summit that resolved that the 'willing seller, willing

buyer' model of land reform must be changed as it is an obstacle to access to land by our people

- f. raised the plight of our public transport system and the fact that it needed much improvement and attention in 2006, including the convening of the national transport indaba
- g. the introduction of the National Health Insurance (NHI) in which our campaigning in 2007 and 2009 on health matters contributed significantly towards this advance
- h. Our campaign against corruption through our Red October Campaign of 2009, and the increase focus by government on these matters including the call for the reform of the government tender system by also making it more transparent

The major lessons from our Red October Campaign include the fact that we must not just satisfy ourselves by becoming professional critics, permanent protestors and lamentors in the face of the many challenges facing our country. But that is essential for the working class to take the lead on concretely what is to be done, through concrete actions and campaigns!

Since 1994, and especially since Polokwane, our country has made some important advances. Today we have an industrial policy, a framework for a new growth path, a proposed NHI, amongst others, and our task should be on how we build on these, to continue to provide leadership in order to change the lives of millions of our people.

Through our Red October Campaign we have deepened our work with the progressive trade union movement, formed important alliances with community organisations, youth and women's groups, faith groups and many progressive NGOs and research initiatives to advance the struggle of ordinary workers and the poor.

The 2011 Red October Campaign is a very special one as it is launched during our 90th anniversary year. It is therefore a Red October also to celebrate the heroic role played by our Party in the national liberation struggle, and the role we continue to play in the reconstruction and development of our country. It is a celebration done in the best way we do as communists, to continue being in the trenches with the workers and poor of our country.

In 2011 the SACP calls upon all our people to join us in campaigning on the following on the following issues:

- a. **People's education for people's power** - Education with an emphasis on making our schools functional, and also the wider challenges of skills and training, with a particular focus on the girl child and the youth.
- b. **Building a solidarity economy** – Through this to, amongst others, building and strengthenings a people's cooperative banks movement as part of taking

forward our campaign to make banks and other financial institutions to serve our people

- c. **Building local people's committees for comprehensive rural development** - With a particular emphasis on building a women's rural movement for land, food and infrastructure for rural development
- d. **Intensifying the struggle against corruption** – Through all these struggles we must these to intensify the struggle against corruption and tenderpreneurs

The 2011 Red October Campaign, seeks to build on the many advances we have made in the past, taking these to higher We must use our voting district (VD) based branches to convene community red forums in all our localities around our key areas of focus, engage communities, as well as intensify our work with and inside the trade union movement.

1. People's education for people's power

Education and skills are the most important tools to empower the workers, the poor, our youth and women, our communities, and to lay a basis for a better life for all in our country. Let us mobilise our youth to take up all the opportunities for schooling and skills development. Let us say to them it is cool to be educated, as part of defeating all the attempts to mislead young people to think that their salvation is in tenders, and often ill-gotten monies as a short cut to riches. Education can never be taken away from anybody, unlike a tender that can be given or taken away the next day.

To this end the SACP is calling upon all our structures, including the alliance structures and communities to embark on the following:

Identifying and fixing dysfunctional schools – The Department of Basic Education has provided us with a list of all poorly performing or dysfunctional schools throughout the country. Let us go out and engage school governing bodies, parents, communities, learners and government departments to identify and mobilise for our schools to work. Let us make sure that there is teaching and learning taking place in all our schools, that teachers and learners are on time, teaching and learning. Let us expose all those teacher, principals and government officials who are not doing their work, and let us ensure that there are no shebeens next to our schools. Let us engage SADTU and other teacher organisations to make sure our schools work!

The SACP also says let us not only focus on secondary schools, but let us also make sure that our primary schools are functional, as foundation learning is very important for the rest of our education system.

Let us convene community forums to discuss, and decide on appropriate actions where we live, to make our schools work. Most of the dysfunctional schools are those attendend by the children of especially the black working class and the poor.

Let us form co-operatives and other community initiatives to ensure that it is these co-operatives that are used by government for the school feeding scheme. The school nutrition scheme is now reaching more that 8 million learners, and let us take this away from individual businesses and give them to co-operatives as part of genuine empowerment of ordinary people.

Why package everything into a tender? Why should the local state and local popular capacities not be harnessed jointly so that government and communities work together to build their own housing, their own schools, maintain their own roads and infrastructure?

It is time that the SACP tackles the many challenges facing the girl-child, for the naming and shaming of teachers who sexually abuse girl-pupils, and to conscientise our communities about the need to fight teenage pregnancy and youth suicide. To this end we must support the YCL call to end the publication of matric results in newspapers, so that we reduce the many stresses already placed on our young people at such a vulnerable age.

Infrastructure, books and stationery – Let us mobilise our communities to ensure that monies allocated to building schools and do away with mud schools. The SACP calls for the building of schools infrastructure, maintenance and repairs be part of the expanded or community public works programmes, and take them out of tenders to individuals. Let us also train our communities and use FET colleges to fix and repair school furniture, as part of creating job opportunities for ordinary people. Let us mobilise to ensure that required resources (books, stationery and teachers) are supplied timeously.

Community skills development and strengthening FET colleges – Let us get closer to making sure that our FET colleges are functional and for accessing government resources for community skills development initiatives. Let us make sure that poor youth in particular take up learning opportunities in FET colleges, now that poor student are no longer required to pay fees in these colleges.

Fighting corruption in all of our education system – It is important that our communities stand up to expose and fight all forms of corruption in our education system. Let us defeat the sometimes unholy alliance between some school or college managers, governing bodies and government officials to squander monies meant for education. Let us campaign to end all forms of corruption in the schooling and education systems

2. Building a solidarity economy

A national summit of the financial sector - This pillar of our campaign must be linked to laying the foundations for the revitalisation of our financial sector campaign. The SACP is calling upon the convening of the second national financial sector summit, including both the private and public financial sector to assess progress made since the signing of the financial sector charter in 2003. We want to know if banks are investing in low-cost houses; why the exorbitant charges they are still charging?; are they investing in a manner that is creating jobs through investment into infrastructure?

Building a co-operative banks movement – Much as private banks must still be pressurised to lend money to the workers and the poor for developmental activities, away from funding narrow BEE, this will not be enough to build the necessary finances to support co-operatives, the informal sector and SMEs. Therefore in the wake of the Co-operative Banks Act, let us engage our burial societies, stokvels and the trade union movement on creating a viable co-operative banks movement, as entities that will support development initiatives in our communities. These must just not be on the periphery but we must work towards mainstreaming them as an important component of a new growth path. This initiative is very crucial in building an alternative solidarity economy that is not based on capitalist greed and selfishness.

Our people's monies in burial societies and stokvels can support a lot of secondary initiatives that are owned and controlled by members of these societies themselves (eg micro banking services, coffin making, etc). Let us convene red forums to engage all our people's initiatives in burial societies, stokvels, and co-operatives for these resources to be pulled together in a manner that supports people's own development initiatives.

It is estimated that more than 60,000 people belong to 121 co-op banking institutions (Savings and Credit Co-ops (SACCO), Financial Services Co-ops (FSC); co-op banks.), with total assets of more than R100-million, employing around 100 people to run and manage these co-ops. Notwithstanding the above, the sector faces challenges ranging from inability to grow in membership, assets and services, lack of skills and effective leadership and governance.

3. Building rural motive forces for Land Reform, Food Production and rural development

The struggle for liberation will be incomplete and suffer major setbacks if there is no deliberate programme to restore back to the formerly oppressed people land taken from under colonialism and apartheid. Government alone, without a mobilised people, will not be able to achieve our land and rural development goals. Despite some progress made on this front, land in our country is still in the hands of a minority.

Rural development is more than just land and agriculture, important as these are, but is about rural infrastructure including access roads, the building of bridges, rural education infrastructure, rural clinics and police stations, and many other facilities that are readily available in many urban areas. Let us campaign for infrastructure as the foundation for sustainable rural economic development

In tackling these the SACP, acting together with the people in rural areas will embark in the following activities:

Conclusion of land restitution claims – Let us engage government and our communities for speedy settlement of all land restitution claims. Let us also ensure that all re-claimed land is used productively through support from government and through the mobilisation of financial and other resources in the hands of the communities. Let our co-operative banks support viable, productive agricultural activities in reclaimed land. Let reclaimed land be used for food production and food security.

The SACP calls for the intensification of the struggle against instances of corruption in the land restitution process. Land meant for the people must not be sold back to former owners because our people do not have the means to use it productively. Land meant for the people must be used by the people themselves and not be shared amongst tenderpreneurs or people in leadership or government positions!

Building People's Committees for rural development – Let the SACP convene people's red forums in all of our rural areas in order to form people's committees for rural development. Where various types of committees already exist to fight for access to land and agricultural activities or rural development, let us strengthen them in order to build motive forces for rural development. Let us pay particular attention to the organisation of women in the rural areas, as they are the ones who stand to benefit most

Transform the white agricultural countryside, with and for workers and poor - Working with FAWU and other progressive trade unions in the 'white' countryside,

let us intensify organisation of farm workers and for farm dwellers to have access to decent accommodation, pension funds, trade union rights, and intensify the struggle against evictions, and for access to education to all children of farm-workers and farm-dwellers.

Let us not allow white agricultural bosses to divide and exploit workers by seeking to replace South African workers with foreign, and vulnerable workers. Let us not fight amongst ourselves as workers, irrespective of our country of national origin, but must unite to defeat the white bosses' divide and rule tactics! We must accelerate the campaign for access to decent accommodation and pension funds for farmworkers, and fight against farm evictions.

Let us expose the racist agenda of organisations like the DA and Afri-forum, who never once raise the issue of abuse and the super-exploitation of black farmworkers, but instead oppose all actions of government to try and change our country for the better!

Let us fight to access to farms to organise farm-workers and address the conditions of farm-dwellers, and for farms to be declared workplaces and public residential areas, so that they are accessible. Let us remove the prison-type walls in farms that are seeking to make workers and their communities some kind of 'prison labour'.

The Evictions Toll Free Number is 0800 007095

Defend the moral and revolutionary integrity of our movement

In order to achieve many of these objectives outlined in our Red October Campaign it is important that we also intensify the struggle to defend all our organisations in the Alliance and the broader progressive movements from the corrupting influence of money and wealth. This requires amongst other that we intensify the struggle in the following areas:

Exposing, naming and shaming those peddling dirty money— Our movement is faced with a serious threat of attempts to buy our cadres with money, to influence decisions in our organisations through money, and to seek to sell our organisation to highest imperialist bidder through dirty money. Let us name and shame those who are trying to buy us. This is money meant to influence you, but once you accept such money, you will never, ever be part of those dishing out money, but will only use that power to steal our organisations, and to steal our government! Let us name and shame money peddlers, tenderpreneurs and those seeking to steal our organisations for their own personal interests of greed!

‘De-tenderise’ the state as much as possible - Worse still, our state is being daily ‘tenderised’ – bureaucrats in the state (some of them highly qualified professionals) don’t actually DO anything, don’t build anything – instead they spend their time writing up tenders and adjudicating on applications. Increasingly the state relates to its popular base by way of these tenders. Instead of uniting popular forces behind a common struggle for transformation, the state divides communities into competing factions all vying for a tender.

This is a source of a great deal of corruption in the state, but also of factionalism within our own organizations which get used as stepping stones to influence the allocation of tenders.

Let us also fight against the latest phenomenon of ‘professional tenderpreneurs’, who do nothing but use their political influence to influence tender awards and get cuts from those corrupt proceeds. Let us not allow the relationship between government and political leadership, on the one hand, and our communities, on the other, to be mediated by the tender!

The SACP calls upon all our alliance to cement its unity by focusing on the key challenges facing our country (poverty, unemployment, disease), and UNITE against corruption and tenderpreneurs!

Expose the corrupting influence and failure of the capitalist system – The whole world is in a crisis today, retrenching millions of especially young workers, because of the greed and selfishness of the capitalist system. Let the workers and the poor of our country unite behind ‘Socialism is the Future, Build it Now’ to roll back the capitalist system and its corrupting influence.

Let all communists go out in their numbers to mobilise our communities behind our Red October Campaign! We call upon all our communities, the workers and the poor to join us in this 2011 Red October Campaign!

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